

Boston Fern

General Information

Boston ferns are the most popular indoor ferns because they can tolerate a variety of indoor settings. They add a finishing touch to any decor. Many cultivars are available. Some have long fronds and others, such as 'Fluffy Ruffles,' are smaller plants with more finely divided fronds.

Light

Provide part shade and part sun. One to three hours of direct sun will grow ferns tight, compact and beautiful. Avoid southern, sunny windows. East, west or north exposure is best.

Ferns grow well without sun when temperatures stay above 75° and have higher humidity. With average humidity and home temperatures, ferns need bright shade and small amounts of sun.

Water

Let plant approach dryness before watering. Very dry soil causes excessive browning starting from the inside of the plant out. Mist ferns only once a week if humidity is low. Ferns need good air movement after misting.

Fertilization

Use a 30-10-10 such as Miracid. Feed every 4th or 5th watering. This could mean once a week in summer if outdoors and watering everyday. Indoors during winter, when watering only every 5 to 10 days, once a month is sufficient.

Propagation

New plants are started by dividing an older plant. Divide older plants every 3 - 5 years. Use a sharp knife and slice the rootball in half or quarters. Replant each piece. Trim any damaged fronds. The best time to do this is April through July.

Grooming

Pick off yellowed leaves and older fronds as desired. You may also trim off the hair-like projecting stems. Keep to desired height and shape with light pruning or clipping at any time.

Problems

Poor drainage, too frequent watering, or standing in water for long periods of time and not enough light are some problems affecting Boston Ferns.